



Young people are motivated by how a job aligns with their values, identity, and a sense of belonging more than by how much it pays.

THEME 1

“When choosing a career path, I prioritize growth opportunities, passion, self-expression, and enjoyment over salary.”

THEME 2

“I want a career that makes a positive impact on society.”

THEME 3

“I avoid pursuing careers or training opportunities that may be considered unpopular by my peers.”



I didn’t want to go into teaching because of the money aspect and pretty much not making any of it. I finally just decided it’s not about the money. It’s more about what I love doing. I want to be successful, but not successful necessarily monetary-wise or moving up the chain of command for education, but just being successful in what I’m doing at the time.

Katie, Age 24



The World Values Survey is a global research project that explores people’s values and beliefs. It is carried out by a network of social scientists who have conducted representative national surveys in almost 100 countries since 1981:

The shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy is linked with pervasive value changes that can be summed up as a shift from survival values to self-expression values. People with survival values are more likely to endorse statements like ‘A good income and safe job are more important than a feeling of accomplishment and working with people you like’ and ‘Imagination is not one of the most important things to teach a child’. People with self-expression values take the opposite position.

(Inglehart, 2018)

How are you thinking about money?



Money is always nice. You need it now if you wanna live in a city. [...] If I am just passionate about something and whether that’s like a super low paying job. If I wanted that, I’d only be successful if I did it. Regardless of the money.

Ben, Age 17

While the majority of young people we talked to—regardless of socioeconomic status—deprioritized salary when thinking about a career path, many of the same people also expressed concerns about affordability and stability.

For young people from lower income backgrounds, the picture is complex. Salary can be highly motivating, particularly for those undecided about a career path.



When I look at lists of majors for college or I'm looking online for interesting careers, the first filter I'll put through is salary because I feel like I don't want to leave college and not be able to find a job. I'm really scared of getting a degree and not knowing what to do with it or wasting my college experience. [...] Actually most of the time I would almost prioritize a salary over whether or not I'm genuinely interested in it.

Lauren, Age 18 (first person in her family to go to college)



Seeing marginalized people struggling with the medical system and seeing that they're suffering and they're not getting helped. [...] I'm pursuing a doctorate in social work to try my best to fix the medical system and maybe change some policies here and there to help marginalized people and low-income families because we are a low-income family, too. [...] For me, honestly, money really doesn't matter.

Meysam, Age 24



Young people want to see people who look like them in higher wage fields, but people of color are underrepresented in these jobs.

THEME 1

“I look for people who look like me in careers that I am interested in.”

THEME 2

“I will likely consider a career based on what those closest to me know about.”

THEME 3

“I want opportunities to explore different careers.”



“

Because firefighting is such a male dominated profession it's hard for a female maybe to see herself as someone that can be successful in that. But for me, I'm into it. [...] Being female just gives me an edge. I'm able to relate to people on a different level. If other females were to join, not only could we relate to the public more, but it would be nice to have some camaraderie there.

Elinor, Age 20 (SYEP Intern)

“

If you're a black 16 year old high school student living in Rainier Beach, how many black folks at Microsoft do you know or at any of the other companies? It's already relatively not a lot in that space, but how do we even connect those folks together?

City of Seattle Employee

“

There's this one job I really want to do. [...] It was coding and working for Microsoft. They took us on a field trip and showed us their office and headquarters and how to code. There was a panel focused more towards girls—girls in coding, girls in engineering. I was really inspired because all of the people on the panel were like, I didn't know I would be a computer engineer and work for Microsoft.

Aliya, Age 16

“

Young people can be in school, out of school, immigrant and refugee kids, limited English proficiency... these are young people that you don't see them in our economy. And they don't see themselves in the economy.

City of Seattle Employee

What can the City of Seattle do to better support youth?

“

Meeting people and consulting with people that are actually in the business would be a lot easier than just being like, 'Oh that sounds fun, I want to do that' and then realizing later on that I have no clue.

Elena, Age 13

“

I want to meet different people who are in that business. They bring different speakers to our school sometimes. I want to see different engineers and different doctors that can talk about their job because I don't know which field of engineering and math I want to go into and I feel like that would help me.

Corinne, Age 14

“

A way to meet other people in the field and learn through them is always helpful. I've found that mentoring is actually the most helpful program for seeing. So you work with somebody else for a day or two and kind of shadow them.

Karl, Age 25



Young people who lack formal work experience have trouble getting jobs because employers use applicants’ prior job experience as an indicator of readiness. This perception also limits the availability of opportunities to gain experience through internships.

THEME 1

“I have trouble getting my first job because entry-level jobs require work experience too. It's even harder if I am under 18.”

THEME 2

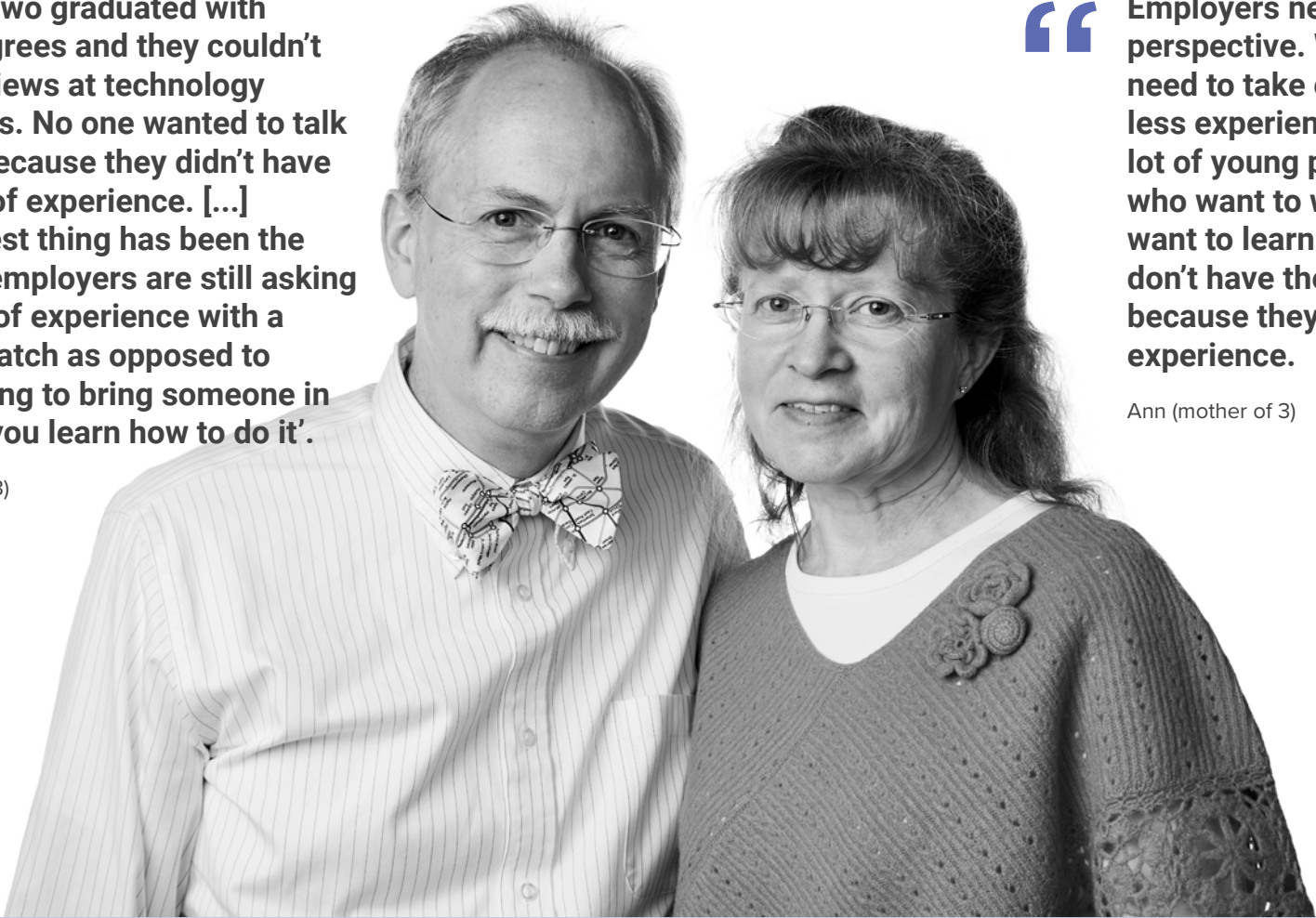
“Sometimes it is difficult for me to access internships and entry-level jobs because I need additional training and support.”

THEME 3

It’s expensive to host an intern in terms of wages and time required to prepare them to do meaningful work. Internships are limited in quantity and hard to get.

“My elder two graduated with STEM degrees and they couldn’t get interviews at technology companies. No one wanted to talk to them because they didn’t have 20 years of experience. [...] The hardest thing has been the fact that employers are still asking for years of experience with a perfect match as opposed to ‘We’re going to bring someone in and help you learn how to do it’.

Earl (father of 3)



“Employers need to shift their perspective. Where they need to take on people with less experience. There’s a lot of young people out there who want to work hard. They want to learn stuff, but they don’t have the opportunities because they don’t have experience.

Ann (mother of 3)

“I was trying to get a job my entire high school experience and most often they’ll just say you need previous job experience to get a job. [...] I applied to Nordstrom’s and they were kind of mean. They called me and then the lady was really rude. She said, ‘This is not what we need. You might want to try the Rack.’

Jinji, Age 18

“If the internship or the work experience of the young person isn't really connected to a class or a career goal, then it's not a super meaningful experience. We need to keep making sure that our experiences are really meaningful for young people.

City of Seattle Employee

“Part of it goes to the minimum wage here to be honest. If they are paying \$15 an hour for an intern, they expect certain skills.

City of Seattle Employee

“The patience or the expectations of employers sometimes need to be recalibrated. Remind them that when you getting an entry level employees sometimes it is part of your job to do the development, the coaching to get them to where they want to go.

Intermediary hired to help with employer engagement

What are some challenges that young employees face?

“I’ve been hearing there’s a Millennial stereotype that we don’t do a good job or something. [...] It’s just a stereotype, so probably not true. [...] In every generation you can find people who work hard and don’t work hard, so it’s not fair to say, okay, this generation specifically doesn’t do a good job.

Meysam, Age 24

Qualitative analyses show that a majority of older employees (over 60% in our sample) describe their young colleagues negatively, and that young employees (close to 30% in our sample) experience reverse age discrimination.

(Raymer et al., 2017)

What can the City of Seattle do to better support youth?

“Provide more opportunities. [...] Internships to get youth into hospitals if they are interested in the medical field or classrooms if they want to be a teacher. Just some stuff related to their interests or something that can build interest for their future.

Kayla Age 17 (SYEP Intern)



Young people value opportunities to gain work-related skills outside of school. Sometimes other responsibilities prevent them from pursuing opportunities for career advancement. Services must provide tangible resources towards practical needs and short-term goals.

THEME 1

"I appreciate hands-on learning experiences since what I learn in school is not always applicable outside the classroom."

THEME 2

"Internships and entry level jobs teach me valuable skills such as communication, teamwork, customer service, and work ethic."

THEME 3

"Sometimes I need to choose between paid work or other priorities and opportunities to advance my career prospects."



We're expected to do things, but I mean what's after that? Okay, go to school, get a job. Well, I did all of those things, but are you really learning about how to file your own taxes? [...] Some of the stuff I learned in high school and college—they not applicable sometimes in the real world. It seems like, Wow, I just wasted years of my life and money for that.

Jessica, Age 27



On why he hasn't tried to use his connections at Microsoft yet:

Not yet because simply, I was a little busy. When you're working a low income job as a security officer, it's really hard to pay all the expenses without working overtime. That's why now I'm working more overtime on the weekends, during midnights.

Ahmad, Age 26



We need to get through some social service type of stuff first and do the youth development to get them to show up and be ready and have the enthusiasm to learn. [...] What we forget is most of us have that nurturing environment to be able to get our first job. And for a lot of young people that we're working with them, they don't have that.

City of Seattle Employee



Have really great programming, but if you're not paying young people to participate, then there's a certain demographic of young people who can or cannot participate because some youth are making choices about do this program that's enriching or do I try to get a job wherever I can even if it's like at McDonald's or whatever so I can make money. So that choice.

City of Seattle Employee

How has your internship influenced your thinking around career?



My dream job is to write music. [...] The whole program has kind of helped me with work ethic and getting things done. It helped me because when I'm writing music, it's a really long process and it's really hard. This kind of helps me to motivate myself to get through it. I mean it's fun, but at times it's kind of boring.

Taylor, Age 16 (SYEP Intern)



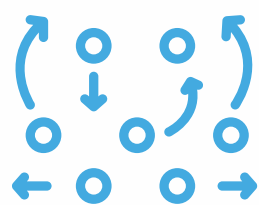
I want to be a federal public defender. [...] A federal public defender is an attorney and being a lawyer and lawyering is all about communication. And that's what this program is. It's about building communication skills, building teamwork, and just the ability to relate to people on any level. And that's what I think firefighting has in common with attorney and law.

Elinor, Age 20 (SYEP Intern)



My internship prepares me for job readiness. Being in a work setting. Being able to work with other people. Communicating. Being able to work on the computer. That's how it helps me.

Maryfaith, Age 19 (SYEP Intern)



Young people are aware of the importance of soft skills like communication and teamwork, but inconsistent evaluation of these skills can lead to bias influenced by race and culture.

THEME 1

Young people emphasized the importance of learning, practicing, and using soft skills to be successful.

THEME 2

Soft skills are loosely defined, and as a result evaluation of them can be culturally biased towards white culture.

THEME 3

“I want to be treated like an individual.”



Not every young person is the same. Some people have different preferences and different foundations. I can handle like too much information at once, but some people can't, and it's like information overload. So I would be a little bit mindful of the things that you're telling them. Kind of not expect them to know much of what you're talking about.

Hani, Age 19 (SYEP Intern)

Soft-skills training is most effective if it addresses the issue of race head-on. Staff does not always match the demographic profile of the participants, and they, too, may need training in cultural competency. Employers need additional soft skills to effectively recruit, manage and retain a more diverse workforce. This gives them the skills to do their part in bridging the cultural gap.

(Fleischer, Annie. E. Casey Foundation, 2001)



We would have to have a conversation about race and equity when we say we want someone to speak proper English, right? You can't have an honest conversation if you aren't willing to say black if you aren't willing to say brown.

With employers we want to definitely press them to articulate again what does it mean to have soft skills.

Intermediary hired to help with employer engagement

Racial discrimination is pervasive in employment processes including hiring, performance evaluation and wages.

(Cavounidis & Lang, 2015; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004)

What can the City of Seattle do to better support youth?



A lot of people don't know some of the common sense etiquette that employers expect. Nowadays the youth of our culture doesn't necessarily adhere to the same customs that the old generation does. If the older generations is doing hiring at the moment... knowing some of those customs and just the courtesy and making eye contact and how firm your handshake should be. Some of those things actually do need to be taught.

Carrie, Age 23



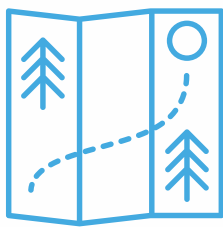
Really be cognizant about the person as a whole, as a whole person. [...] People are dealing with death, they're dealing with suicide, depression, anxiety. And they're bringing all of that into these spaces and taking more thought into how you support your employee or customer as a whole.

Lakesha, Mother of 2



We're all different. There's so many different race backgrounds that come in with it. There's so many different people from different economic issues. [...] Try to get to know your intern a little more.

Maryfaith, Age 19 (SYEP Intern)



Fueled by the racial inequities of arts education, there’s a disconnect between youth’s desire to use creative skills and their knowledge of how those skills can be used to make a living. This limits exposure the growing creative economy and the opportunity to participate.

THEME 1

“An arts education can give me desirable ‘21st century skills’ such as creativity, imagination, flexibility, and adaptability.”

THEME 2

“I want a job that allows me to express myself.”

THEME 3

“I don't generally see a career in the arts as a viable option – and neither do my advisors.”



I want the ability to creatively express myself with an empowering message for others to see. [...] I’m not really knowledgeable in the art world and what compensation is for it or how that all even works. Of course there’s a stigma around artists, like it’s not a real job. So somehow shifting that stigma in society as a whole to not see art as a joke.

Claire, Age 27



I think about arts education and its ability to support young people to be critical thinkers and lifelong learners so we’re not just supporting young people to access jobs, but to be the kind of people who will shape and define the next industry slash sector and come with the creative capacities to be able to do that and to really adjust.

City of Seattle Employee



We can talk about the skills that is required, but who gets to manage creatively? Who gets to envision how they’re going to work with a team creatively? It’s coded language. [...] We’re talking about creative habits like imagination, collaboration, and communication, but we’re also talking about a hierarchy that overlaps class and education.

City of Seattle Employee

~~~~~ What would you like about your dream job? ~~~~~



Writing music lets me just express myself. And then it helps me see connectedness with other human beings. See them express themselves whether they are a performer or they are the lyricist behind adding to it or something.

Adrian, Age 24



The art experience that I’ve had here, there’s a little bit more of a glass ceiling especially for young people. [...] I know a lot of young artists who even just graduated and are having trouble finding jobs in their field and are having trouble getting into gallery spaces especially. [...] I know a lot of older successful artists who are like, even now it’s hard for me.

Parker, Age 19



Photography. I’ve been doing a lot of client work. I have my own photography business that I do my own thing. [...] I just really like capturing... I feel like saying capturing moments is so cheesy, but being able see something differently and capture it in your own way.

Tessa, Age 21



Personally, I would like to be an actor.  
But that’s not like, super smart.

Female, Age 14





Schools typically prioritize academic success over employment down the road and staff struggle to bridge this gap. Other caring adults encourage young people to pursue their dream careers but often lack practical knowledge needed to guide those young people toward concrete actions that advance their career goals.

THEME 1

“Caring adults play an essential role in helping me to identify career pathways.”

THEME 2

“When school provides career guidance, I appreciate it. However, it typically does not provide me with practical steps towards career goals.”

THEME 3

“School might train me for a job, but doesn’t teach me how to get a job.”



The biggest problem that a lot of people have when they’re looking for a job is that the wrong things are handed to them so people are helping, but in the wrong way. [...] The opportunities were things that they could do on their own. [...] Things like resources that just tell people go online, Google, indeed.com. That isn’t useful to people because they can do that already.

Carrie, Age 23



My mom’s always supported me. [...] It’s kind of all up to me and it’s nice to have support and know that my family is proud of me. She’s that kind of moral support that I’ve always needed, especially growing up in a single family household for so long. It’s really important to have someone by your side.

Jinji, Age 18



I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do, but I talked to one of my counselors there at the school and they were like, I feel like you would be a good dental hygienist. I don’t know why. And I’m like, okay, I’ll try it out and I started taking the pre-reqs. And I just really really like it.

Sabine, Age 19



My parents always pushed me to do better and go to college. And just become a better person. I’m still living at home. I have a part time job, but they’re telling me not to worry about that. They are taking care of everything and they are letting me grow as a person and move on from this. They have a pretty big impact.

Ana, Age 20



My dream job is to get my medical assistant certificate and then become a registered nurse so I can help people. [...] Somebody had told me and you know if that person hadn’t told me and spread the message, I wouldn’t know that there was a medical assistant here. I would have taken a registered nurse course which takes a long time.

Bahsan, Age 21



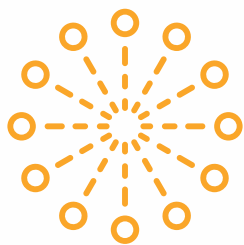
I want to be an actor not to become famous, but just to see how it is. Learn other people. Because acting you’re taking another role... One time you could be a famous person, another time you can be a homeless guy living on the street. So acting you have different mindset basically. [...] I went to Franklin High School. I did a couple of plays and stuff. There’s people that came through to help us act. They inspired me.

Hassan, Age 19



On what the loss of his school’s counselor would mean:  
Being able to have a real person they can you know tell me what I, you know options for me, is helpful. Otherwise I’d have to go, looking online at stuff or something like that versus having someone who, like, you can talk to face to face, who actually knows you. Because I don’t really have another person that can do that the same way.

Oliver, Age 16



Leveraging social connections can compensate for the lack of experience or credentials that make it hard for young people to get a job. In communities where adults are underrepresented in higher wage jobs, youth lack access to social capital that would help them overcome these barriers to new careers.

THEME 1

“When I find work, it is often through people that I know.”

THEME 2

“It’s not enough to have social connections, I need to be aware of how to build and use the skills required to make and use connections.”

THEME 3

“If I lack relevant connections and social networks, I have limited exposure to different career paths.”



Connections is really what got me to go from Chipotle to Virginia Mason Hospital. I really truly believe that. It's just constantly making conversations with people anywhere on the bus, at school, through friends, at a bar, at the art shop. I like to engage in a conversation where I can kind of figure out what they're useful for and I in return can offer. I've been called 'The Networker'.

MJ, Age 27



Think about how we got jobs. [...] We want to help young people build understanding of what their social capital is. Even if you can look at the data and say that the labor market does this and if you follow the rules, you will get this job. We know that is not true. [...] Somebody said F.B.I. the other day. Friends, brothers, in-laws is how you get jobs.

City of Seattle Employee



If you're trying to make a living, you have to be able to know the technical side and the business side. [...] What we hear at school is that 70 percent of your work is making connections that can be monetary. [...] The faculty really help. They've shouted me up for like wedding jobs which has been freaking tremendous. [...] It's immersing yourself in the environment so you're going to the connections no matter what.

Ethan, Age 22



70-80% of jobs are not published, and the vast majority of jobs are found through friends and relationships.

(NPR, 2011)

How did you get a job?



Our family is sort of friends with the owners. I had emailed them a few weeks ago asking if they’d even be willing to hire me and then they just did. I mean they told me to come in and interview. I came in ready with my resume and everything and they just asked me, Okay come back tomorrow!

Lauren, Age 17



I applied to so many places. I couldn’t really get a job. Then my dad... they knew an interpreter that they had from the doctor appointments and they told their interpreter and the interpreter found me a job. That person found me a job at a restaurant. That person, they didn’t know me, right? [...] It’s really hard nowadays to get a job without connections. It’s almost impossible. That is from my experience.

Meysam, Age 24



A friend of mine—or a friend of my mom’s really—knows the owner of the company and so then I told her that I wasn’t liking my current job. She was like, do you want to talk to this guy I know? And I was like, yeah sure. So I kind of got that job through there. And then nannying, I’ve been doing for a really long time just because my mom had friends.

Parker, Age 19





Young people who have overcome the most obstacles in their life add particular value to the workplace because of the strengths they forge along the way. They should be seen as a valuable asset instead of someone who needs help.

THEME 1

“I have many strengths such as optimism and resilience.”

THEME 2

“I bring fresh energy and new ideas to the workplace.”

THEME 3

“Facing difficult circumstances has helped me to develop an ‘extra muscle’.”



School is expensive you know. I have to work, make money, and then pay for it. Sometimes I work paycheck to paycheck. So it's not easy to pay school while working at the same time. So I feel like finance might be something that will stop me to reach my goals, but I feel like God is for me. I will graduate and I'm not going to have anything else to hold me back.

Axel, Age 23



These new kinds of ways we interact with technology are forming and it's so natural to younger people and I think that makes it easier for them to think about how to do things that I wouldn't even think of. [...] There's some advantages there in being able to tap into how they think because the way they interact with things is different.

City of Seattle Employee



You have to work really hard until you can get to a place where you can have fun doing your work. An example of that is working to pay for college and then going to college and then working a lot more. [...] Being able to understand that doing work that's really hard or takes up a lot of energy is working towards a goal that I want to pursue

Oliver, Age 16



How I want my future to be is successful, joyful, and pleasant. I think it'll be a struggle. Definitely triumph and diligence will play a big part of it. Overcoming will be another big factor. [...] I want it to be great, but it'll be difficult for it to be great. [...] It will take way more than four years to actually establish all the things that I want to have established. I'll be in school full-time, working part-time and making minimum wage.

Jinji, Age 18



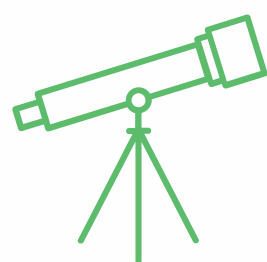
Just in general, when you are part of communities that are trying to survive, you tend to build this extra muscle that others might not have, and then as you thrive, you have the mindset of just getting to the next level. I'm generalizing, but I think that's [...] something that is a benefit.

City of Seattle Employee



Sometimes you feel disappointment or you see things are very difficult, but I always keep myself aspiring and I have an optimistic view. It's gonna take time but you will have it if you want it. If you really want and work toward it, you will have it. Not maybe in one year, maybe in two years or three years. It's something that I'm optimistic about, that one day I will make it.

Ahmad, Age 26



Many of the skills employers value are the same uniquely human abilities that will help young people adapt and thrive in a future marked by automation of routine tasks and non-traditional “gig” work arrangements. Opportunities to obtain the adaptive and entrepreneurial skills are required to thrive in this new context for work.

THEME 1

Automation and artificial intelligence will change the nature of many jobs.

THEME 2

Employers value creativity and adaptability in their employees. The creative economy and creative jobs offer new possibilities well.

THEME 3

“I want and expect a life that is ever changing and a diverse career path with multiple fields represented.”



How would you describe your ideal employee?



One that has adaptability. One that is very responsive. And one that can learn on the fly. It's key when it comes to an intern or just an employee in general. [...] You have to just be very adaptable and just be able be quick to learn and the learning curve obviously is very steep for many. You just have to be able to trust the process you go through that it's all going to work out at the end.

Jeron "Bookie", Planning Manager

Automation will significantly alter or eliminate jobs that consist of activities that can be replaced with technology, for instance data processing or physical work in predictable environments.  
(Manyika, et. al, McKinsey Global Institute, 2017)

“Entrepreneurship is one of we think three of the most important priority skills that we need to equip young people with. [...] The ability to know how to earn, how to identify opportunity and create initiative, deliver value for clients. Because almost every young person is going to spend some time self-employed, some time working for other people.[...] Entrepreneurship, confidence, relationship skills, those I think are the keys to success, not just in work, but in life in the next generation.  
National expert on learning on future of work

Seattle has experienced rapid job growth over the last several years. From 2012 to 2017 the total number of jobs increased by 14.2%, while the number of creative jobs grew by 23.3%. Seattle added 4,373 more creative jobs than it would have if it had followed national trends.  
(Office of Economic Development, 2018)

The know-how and analytic skills that made them indispensable in the knowledge economy no longer give them an advantage over increasingly intelligent machines. But they will still bring to their work essential traits that can't be and won't be programmed into software, like creativity, passion, character, and collaborative spirit—their humanity, in other words.  
(Seidman, 2014)

“The positions that are higher up in an organization tend to call out the need for innovation and creativity as primary skill sets to do the work because you're in a position where you're constantly responding to new things, you're having to generate new ideas, you're going to have to find the next thing that hasn't yet been developed or invented. [...] Those creative capacities are talked about with young people. Support them in order to develop the kinds of skills that they need to consistently reinvent themselves and to do the kind of work a robot can't do.  
City of Seattle Employee

Our economy has evolved through agarian, industrial, and knowledge phases to the point where the essential qualities of human beings are the most critical.  
(Bush, 2018)